



Washington School Kindergarten devotes a day to Hans Christian Anderson

June of last year was the beginning of worldwide celebrations of the 200 birthday of Hans Christian Anderson, the Danish storyteller that left the world a legacy of original and moving tales that have been labeled “Fairy Tales.” Those that are well versed in his stories of love, irony and sacrifice and will tell you they are so much more, often quite sad and placing a spotlight on social injustice. Aruba has been fortunate to have just such a person visiting the island this past week; drs. Lone Leth Larsen, the Director of the Danish Cultural Institute for Benelux and Brussels, accompanied by her husband Peter Edelbos. Mirto Lacle, President of the Hans Christian Anderson Commission, has been escorting them to a number of the events that are taking place in Aruba during this month to commemorate the immortal stories of the man who not only wrote “Fairy Tales,” but also was a poet, playwright, artist and extremely astute travel writer. On Thursday morning they visited the Washington Kleuterschool, where the teachers had organized an morning of activities and expositions devoted to Hans Christian Anderson. Aside from a delightful dance performed by student of all levels of the school and choreographed by Juffrow Ingrid, there was an exposition of the student’s artwork, including paper cuts, something for which the Danish writer was quite well known, and readings of his famous tales by a fairy princess. Juffrow Lisa made sure to make a video recording of all the charming endeavors of the youngsters.

Ms. Larsen was very pleased to see that the month long exposition of the work of Hans Christian Anderson is not focusing on the “sugar-coated” distortions that animated films have propagated of his work, but the true moral tales that more often have a heart-breaking final resolution. She remarked that Anderson said, “I am not writing for children, but perhaps through children I will reach the adults.”

The irrepressible antics of the kindergarten students could not help but amuse and delight Ms. Larsen and her husband. She expressed that she was grateful for the opportunity to travel to Aruba and see how revered the author is by island educators, and that they are passing this on to another generation. She also expressed that she was very pleased to see demonstrated on Thursday morning how Anderson’s work “is being used to spark creativity in young people.”

This month of celebration will continue with lectures at the University of Aruba, reenactments of his stories for the schools at the Cas di Cultura, and an exposition open to the public at Aruba’s National Library. The Access Art Gallery on Caya Betico Croes is featuring films of the Danish Dogma movement every Thursday evening as well, and there are readings at the National Library every Tuesday afternoon from 3 pm to 4:30. Island visitors are welcome to join any of these events.